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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH
OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WORKING PAPER

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Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 6 MAR 1978 By: *011*

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Vol. IV No.8

For Week Ending
2 March 1949

GREECE

Relations with Tito: The Greek Government is now considering the possibility of seeking a rapprochement with Tito, on the basis of recent indications that Yugoslavia may be taking a more conciliatory attitude toward Greece. Thus far there have been no definite signs of a switch in Tito's policy. Unconfirmed reports assert that Yugoslavia has halted arms shipments intended for the guerrillas and that the guerrillas have shifted their radio from Belgrade to Bucharest; in addition, the question of repairing the long-disused Yugoslav Free Zone port facilities was recently raised informally with the Greeks. The guerrillas were able to use Yugoslav territory as a base and refuge in a recent attack on a Greek frontier post, however, while Tito's press and radio, although unusually reticent concerning the Markos purge, continue to support the general Cominform line on Greece.

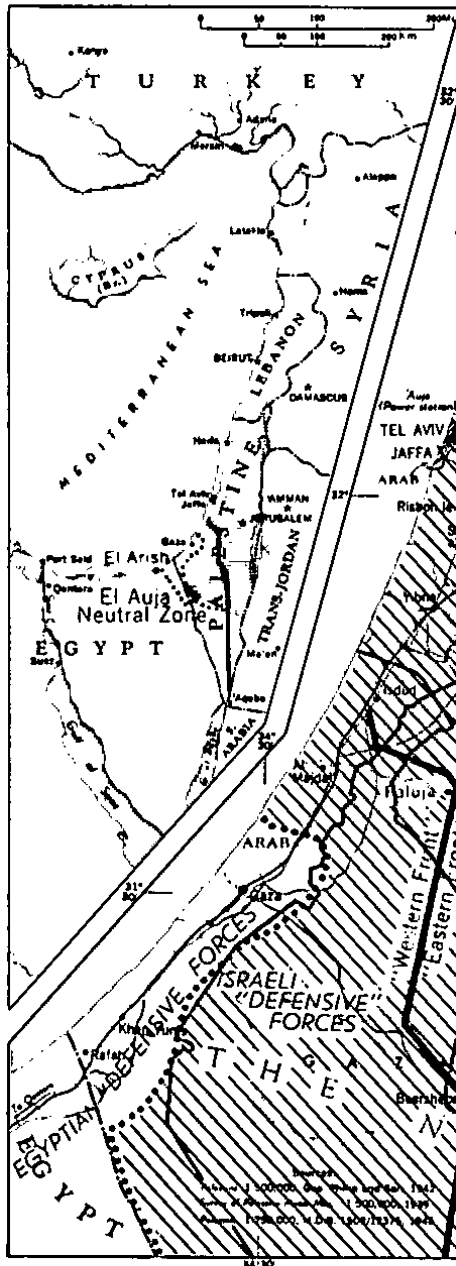
EGYPT

Cairo Cabinet changes: The highlight of the minor Egyptian Cabinet reshuffle (27 February) was the return to the Foreign Affairs post of Ahmed Mohammed Khashaba Pasha, who left the government after the assassination of Prime Minister Nokrashy Pasha last December. Khashaba's reentry to the cabinet again puts the spotlight on Egyptian attempts to improve the country's relations with the UK, since it was Khashaba who figured prominently last fall in efforts by the King and other high Egyptian officials to find a new basis for reopening Anglo-Egyptian treaty talks. There have also been other recent moves by Egypt to improve relations with the UK. Even before the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian armistice agreement last week, King Farouk had reportedly indicated to the British his approval of a proposed British air training plan in the Canal Zone for Egyptians. In addition, Egyptian officials recently manifested a surprising friendliness toward the British in discussions concerning an enlarged Nile water control scheme.

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RESTRICTED

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- 0 10 20 30 Kilometers



The map illustrates the State of Israel and its surrounding regions, including the GAZA STRIP, WEST BANK, and JERICO. It shows administrative boundaries, major cities, and military zones. Key cities include Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Beersheva. The map includes a legend for 'LEBANESE AND IRREGULAR FORCES', 'SYRIAN FORCES', 'IRAQI FORCES', and 'PALESTINE ARMY'. The map is dated 1967 and is a black and white reproduction.

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PALESTINE

The armistice agreement: The Israeli-Egyptian armistice agreement affects the military situation only in the Western Negeb, along the Egyptian frontier. Beersheba, which under the UN Partition Plan of 1947 was to be under Arab control, is omitted from the armistice provisions, on the grounds that its control will be determined by a separate arrangement worked out between Israel and Transjordan. As a result, changes in the disposition of Arab and Jewish forces in the eastern Negeb, as well as in northern and central Palestine, depend on the conclusion of Israel's current negotiations with Transjordan at Rhodes and with Lebanon at the border town of Ras Nagura and on any future arrangements made with Syria.

For Egypt, the armistice agreement provides for the already accomplished release and return of the 'lost' brigade at Faluja and authorized 'defensive' Egyptian forces to remain in the Gaza coastal strip. Israel, while withdrawing its forces from El Auja and Bir Asluj, is permitted to keep 'defensive' forces in the Jewish settlements, thereby assuring continued Israeli control in the western Negeb.

IRAN

The Shah's proposals: The Shah has finally taken steps to initiate constitutional reform in Iran by summoning an extraordinary meeting of the country's leading political figures to propose a Constituent Assembly. The meeting was notable for both the moderation of the Shah's approach to the problem and for the assurance of Majlis support which emerged from the gathering. For months the Shah has railed against the Majlis for inefficiency and inaction, and despite US and UK advice in favor of moderation it appeared possible that he might resort to drastic action to increase his own powers. He has now committed himself to working with the Majlis rather than in defiance of it; under his plan the Majlis would authorize immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly to consider constitutional changes but would itself take up two other reforms, the establishment of a Senate and the revision of the election laws. If these two issues were not acted upon by the Majlis during its remaining four months in office, they would then go before the Constituent Assembly.

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NOTED IN BRIEF

The vote may be extended to women in the next Greek local elections. The government, which hopes to have electoral lists ready for local elections by June, is considering extending suffrage, in both local and national elections, to all women over 21; at present women over 31 can vote in local elections but not in national elections. This restriction has been one of the many Communist talking points in Greece.

* * *

US officials in Cyprus are concerned over lack of governmental protection against possible Communist sabotage of the US monitoring station and a 100,000-gallon aviation gasoline store of the Air Force.

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The Turkish armed forces are now engaging, for the second time within the last few months, in a maneuver problem involving the defense of both shores of the Black Sea entrance to the Bosphorus.

* * *

A serious split in the Lebanese Communist Party has arisen over the leadership of Khalid Baghdash, head of the Syrian Communist Party. Opposition to Baghdash among Lebanese Communists, who have long resented their subservience to the Syrian branch of the Party, was apparently precipitated by his engineering the suspension from the Party of Artin Madoyan, Armenian representative on the Central Committee. It is not yet certain which side the Soviets will support. Although the Party owes much to Baghdash's powerful and energetic leadership, Raif Khuri, the opposition leader, is officially listed as an employee in the information department of the Soviet Legation in Beirut.

* * *

A typhus epidemic is threatened at Hebron, where an influx of Arab refugees has increased the normal population of 27,000 to a reported 80,000. Meanwhile, little progress has been made toward an over-all settlement of the refugee problem. Determination that

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the refugees shall be given the choice of repatriation or compensation for property now within Israel has been the unanimous expression of Arab leaders in discussions with the Palestine Conciliation Commission. Israel, on the other hand, is reluctant to make a commitment that might reduce peace-table bargaining leverage. However, Jewish leaders have intimated that they are considering a resettlement plan involving an exchange of population, and the Arab states are beginning to accept the Palestine Conciliation Commission's contention that the Arab refugee problem must be considered at a general peace conference.

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The strong action of the Government of India in arresting a reported 1,000 Communists and the introduction of a bill in Parliament to prevent strikes in essential services have considerably lessened the fear that the railway, post and telegraph strike scheduled for 9 March by a small number of Communist-dominated unions will assume serious proportions.

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The first World Conference of Moslems, which was held 18-19 February in Karachi, passed numerous resolutions on current affairs and broached the idea of an Islamic state embracing all independent Moslem nations. Although inconclusive, the meeting did further Pakistan's plans to promote unity in the Moslem world under Pakistan's leadership.

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